

Tricks Up His Sleeve

Jim Baldauf To Pull Act Out Of His Hat For Routine

By LANI PRESSWOOD
Battalion Amusements Editor
Jim Baldauf, A&M's ITS entry, is sure to have a few tricks up his sleeve Saturday night — he's a professional magician.

The 22-year-old English major combined a sharp line of patter with his smooth magic act to win the Aggie Talent Show back in December and gain a berth in this 15th annual ITS.

In anticipation of his upcoming appearance, Baldauf has been concentrating heavily on perfecting his routine for the past couple of weeks and has added several new tricks.

Although he confesses that he's still "nervous before every per-

formance," Jim has been appearing on stage as a magician for over ten years.

He has appeared before church, civic and school groups as well as other talent shows since he first started pulling rabbits out of top hats. After awhile he switched from amateur to professional status and has held membership in both the International Brotherhood of Magicians and the Texas Association of Magicians.

Baldauf dates his serious interest in magic back about ten years, when he was living in Pennsylvania. A then 94-year-old show business veteran, James Bard, provided the spark.

Bard was a friend and professional colleague of Harry Houdini, one of the legendary names in entertainment history.

"Bard was a retired vaudeville performer," Baldauf recalls, "and a close personal friend of Houdini's. He was in the top acrobatic act in vaudeville during his day. He gave me several personal letters of Houdini's, a stage costume of Mrs. Houdini's, and some other things."

One of Bard's gifts hangs in Baldauf's living room — a vaudeville advertising poster dated 1897.

The poster is not the only unusual item in Jim's living room, though. A boa constrictor measuring over six feet occupies a cage in one corner.

Baldauf and his wife Margaret have named the reptile 'Bo' and keep him healthy on a steady diet of rats. About once a month they let Bo out to slither around the house and get his exercise.

Baldauf's interest in animals, as well as magic, may well be hereditary. His father, Richard, heads up both the A&M Wildlife Sciences Department and the Aggeland Combo.

Jim and his wife of over two years, the former Margaret Thames, are both graduates of A&M Consolidated.

He calls Margaret "a tremendous aid" and reveals that "she is engaged in a lot of the backstage work in my act."

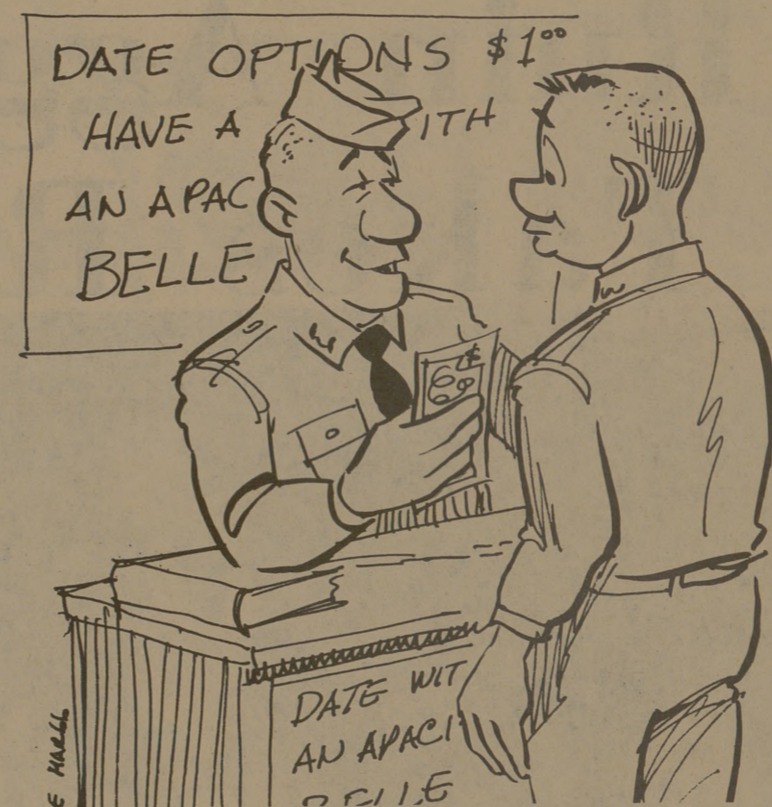
Baldauf hopes to keep magic as a sideline but his future plans are geared toward graduate school and not the stage. But even though he doesn't plan to pursue magic as a career, Baldauf is serious about the field and offers some thoughtful observations on the subject.

"Magic is one of the oldest forms of entertainment and the sorcerers and alchemists of old made some important scientific discoveries.

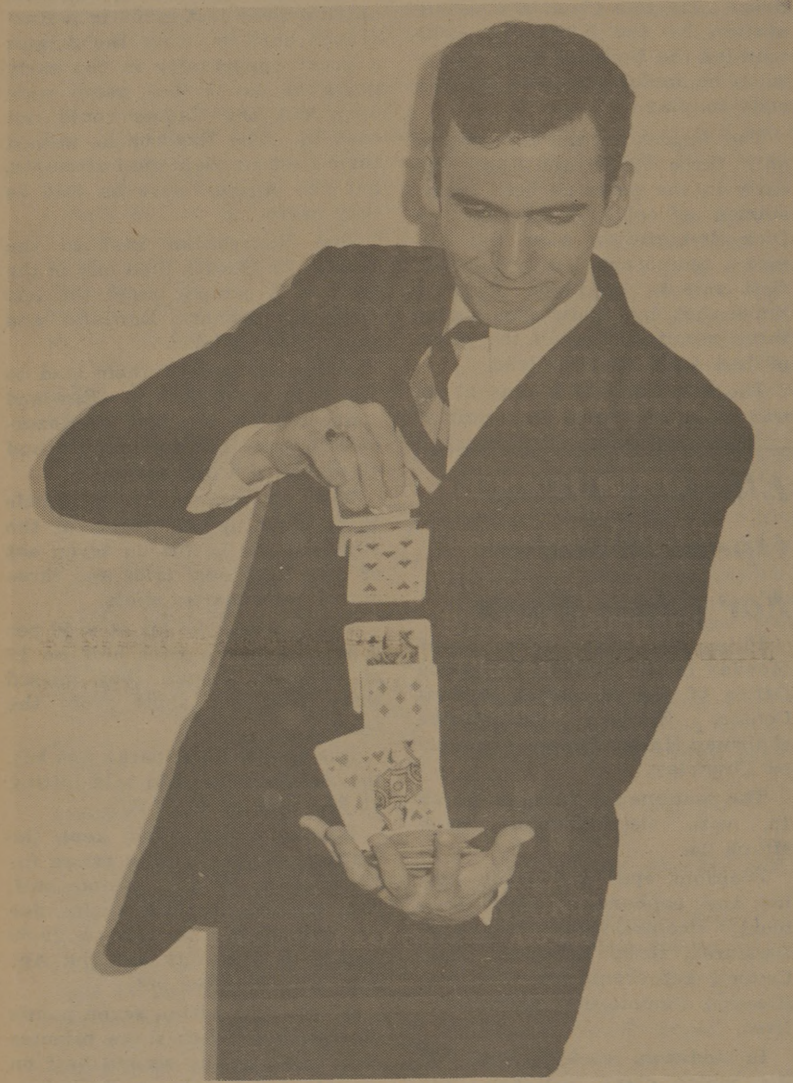
"In this technological age, the public isn't impressed with gimmicks and tricky boxes. The trend in magic now is toward simplicity, sleight of hand, and good entertainment."

For a sample of what he means come out to ITS tomorrow night. But sit close to the front only at your own peril . . . one of the staples of his act is audience participation.

CADET SLOUCH by Jim Earle



"Thanks friend! This option entitles you to select the Apache Belle of your choice at th' ITS Saturday and ask her for a date!"



BALDAUF REHEARSES ROUTINE ... A&M ITS entry practices card trick.

THE BATTALION

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